

Dr. K. Wrona

“Interesting. Let me tell you why you believe that.”

Dr. K. Wrona is a **psychologist** and **cold reader**, which they have often presented as an **occult** gift, as an ability (faked) at **fortune-telling**. They are extremely **empathic**, and skilled at both **detecting if someone is lying**, and **fashioning lies** of their own. Wrona is extremely **charismatic**, and **persuasive**, but sometimes believes their own stories on fortune-telling.

Background

You are a psychologist with a keen interest in the mythical, the supernatural, and the occult. Most of your psychological research has been set on this study of how humanity interacts with these phenomena, and on the social structure of various cults. While you started out as a disbeliever and skeptic, you have seen enough strange oddities to begin to believe that dark gods do exist, and that they do loan their powers to human kind. One particular area of interest for you is the **Book of the Dead**, originally known as **Al Azif**. It is said to be a compendium on how to talk to these dark gods, and how to open gateways to them. And now, you have been contacted by Professor Gregory Jenkins, the head of Princeton’s Department of Archeology and Antiquities, who wishes for you to become involved in an expedition to a Greek island — what interests you is that on the island is Dr. James Templeton, an Archaeologist you once heard speaking about the historical importance of the Book of the Dead, and a Greek copy he had discovered somewhere in continental Europe. You wonder what the chances are that this archaeological expedition has anything to do with Al Azif?

Setting the Scene

Prof. Jenkins would like to see you in person, and his department pays for your trip. Soon you find yourself amongst a group of four other people in Prof. Jenkins’s lavish third floor office: Prof Jenkins himself; Dr. Bowen, an archaeologist; Dr. Singh, a paleontologist; and Prof. Giles, a classicist and philologist.

Prof. Jenkins is an old man close to 70. He walks slowly, with an obvious limp, and supports himself with an ornate cane. His office is fairly luxurious, with a large, solid wooden desk sitting in front of the windows. Various antiquities decorate the office: pottery in glass cabinets, statues great and small on desks and shelves, weapons and armor hang on display. Most of the artifacts appear to be Greek, or related to Greek mythology.

After passing out drinks (whiskey, coffee and tea), Prof. Jenkins explains the work that he has brought you together for.

A few months ago, **Dr James Templeton** from the department led an expedition to explore the ruins of the **Acropolis Achlys** on **Kleitos Island**, one of the Greek islands in the Aegean sea. Achlys was rumored to have once been the home to one of the darker mystery cults that had built a community for itself around the **Oracle of Echidna**, who was one of the chthonic Greek gods, a nymph who was often called the **Mother of all Monsters**. This was the only known Oracle to the god, and Templeton had reported that his team had found the ruins and begun the excavation work.

“Three months ago,” Jenkins says, “James sent this letter and a roll of 620 film, which I’ve had developed” He hands you note 1.

Prof Jenkins
Department of Archeology and Antiquities
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey
USA

Dr. James Templeton
Kleitos Island
c/o Demetrios Patsatzoglou, Magnisias Town

Dear Gregory,

I hope this letter finds you well.

We have made an amazing discovery! A week ago we found the petrified remains of the strangest creature buried in the tomb region of the Oracle: a chimera of sorts, some blend of snake and human, like the lamia or drakaina of mythology. We estimate it to be perhaps 6.5 ft in length, perhaps 7, although how high it stood (if indeed it could even stand), we do not know.

I've attached photographs. As you can see, the corpse is still firmly embedded in the matrix.

Send us a paleontologist who feels confident that they can safely exhume this thing. Dr Singh of Columbia University is my recommendation, but I leave the decision up to you.

All the best,

James Templeton

Note 1: Letter, from James Templeton to Gregory Jenkins

"As you can see," he says, "we're in need of a paleontologist. **Dr Singh**, well, you were James's first choice. And so here you are. Your work on the reconstruction of the *Hypacrosaurus altispinus* specimen was really quite exemplary. And surely there will be a paper in this Kleitos work as well, a first description of a possibly new class or even phylum of the animal kingdom." Jenkins takes out a collection of large, black and white photographs. They show the petrified specimen still half buried in sediment. Dr Singh says, "This is definitely not of any known class of animal."

Bowen looks at the pictures, and says, "That looks like limestone matrix. It was wise of Templeton to ask for experienced help: that rock can be harder than concrete."

"Unfortunately," Prof. Jenkins says, "there have been complications, which necessitates us sending a larger group of people, a second expedition, if you will." It seems that the letter was the last communication with Dr. Templeton and his team. He has not responded to any further written communication, nor to any radio communiques. A group from the *University of Athens* had visited the island to look for the team, but found the team's rented house on the island abandoned, ransacked, and covered in blood. The local police had said that the body of a half eaten goat had been found on their kitchen table, and that the team was suspected of being involved in some dark

Beware the darkness from which they climb. Seekers will be watched.

Note 2: A letter in Arabic. The right edge is stained a rusty brown.

cult.

Worse, the team's camp at the Acropolis was full of bullet holes, which the police explained as being the by product of a populous keen on chasing the archaeologists from the island. No bodies have been found, and a fisherman had reported that the archaeologists had hired him to transport them to Athens. The local police have assumed that Templeton and his team left the island of their own free will.

The teams current whereabouts are unknown — if they had even reached Athens at all.

"This is an important find, not only to the University, but to the scientific community at large. It might not only shift our understanding of animal biology and evolutionary history, but of our own history. And so I want the four of you to go to Kleitos, secure the find, and to reach the bottom of whatever the hell is happening on that island."

"**Dr Bowen**, you have, um —" and here Jenkins seems a bit uncomfortable, "— a reputation. As a bit of a maverick, with a good feeling for violence and when to employ it. And while I hope those skills won't be required, we need someone like you to help secure the site, ensure the safety of the team members, and to lead the investigation into what happened to Dr. Templeton and his team on the island. If they're still on the island, find them if you can. If they've met an untimely demise, inform the authorities."

"**Professor Giles**, why I asked you hear is pretty straight forward. Your knowledge of ancient Greek history, language and mythology is unsurpassed. Your translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are standards works in our undergraduate courses. This, and you're, um, devotion to Nyx will provide insights into the minds of any possible cultists on the island. And I understand that you're also fairly familiar with Arabic, yes?" Jenkins hands Giles note 2.

Giles reads the letter, then says, "Well, it's written in a combination of classical and modern standard Arabic. Let me translate it," and then reads the translation. "I can't say I recognize or understand the reference, though."

But you do recognize a part of that. "Beware the darkness from which they climb," you say. "That's a reference from the Book of the Dead, an occult text."

"The Book of the Dead?" Jenkins says. "I haven't heard of it. But that is why I want you here, **Dr. Wrona** — your studies in the occult intrigue me. We seem to have some cultist group involved in this, and your studies in the mind of the cultist and the superstitious might come in useful. I was hoping that you and Professor Giles could determine what cult activities Dr. Templeton was involved in, and to support Dr. Bowen in uncovering the truth of Dr Templeton and his lost team."

Prof. Jenkins has booked you all rooms on the RMS Queen Mary, thus beginning your trip across the Atlantic and continental Europe. In addition, the department has **provided the team with \$1000**, which you convert to 150 000 Drachma in Athens. You and the others are aware of the high

purchasing power of this money, and go about **buying what gear you feel you might need** on Kleitos island.

You then find a small sailing vessel, a fisherman's boat, to take you on the trip to Kleitos. The fisherman is **Joachim Georgiadis**, and he helps the four of you to load your belongings.

The next day a fog settles in around the ship, and apart from the breeze all is still. The sun begins to set, but Joachim seems to know where he is going, and says that you will soon be at your destination: the port of Magnisias, Kleitos island.

Kleitos Island

This is what you're told about the island: Kleitos is a small island. It has only one town, **Magnisias**, which lies on its southern coastline. Magnisias has seen use as a fishing village and port since antiquity. At the island's center, on a hilltop, lies the **Acropolis Achlys**. The ruins are now completely abandoned, and Dr. Templeton's team had reported that few of the island's small population of residents ever visited.

Kleitos has no electricity and few cars. Carts, donkeys and mules are still in common use.

What you know of the others

Dr. Bowen: you've never heard of them. They seem intimidating, and you're fairly certain that they wouldn't think twice at applying coercive force to a situation.

Prof. Giles: this person is a well known classicist. You've used their translations to help understand historic Greek mystery cults. Your sense of them is that they have a leaning towards superstitious thinking. And what is this talk of Nyx?

Dr. Singh: you've never met, but they seem level headed and an unbeliever.

Dr. Templeton: he seemed quick witted when you saw him speak about the Book of the Dead.

Al Azif: The Book of the Dead

Al Azif is the Arabic title for the nocturnal sound made by insect and that is often mistaken for the howling of demons and jinn. The text was written some time before 1000AD, and has been translated into Greek and Latin as the **Book of the Dead**, or the **Necronomicon**. The original Arabic text is no longer extant, but quotations do exist in the works of various authors. There are few copies of the Greek and Latin to be found, and the handful that exist are closely guarded by their owners. Reading the book is thought to drive one slowly insane. You have gathered a working knowledge of Greek from your various studies related to the book, since your university (the Miskatonic University) is one of the few institutions to have a copy in Greek.

The book is a compendium of spells, magical wards, and stories concerning dark gods and the opening of gateways through which to reach them. You have taken extensive notes from the book, and have often experimented with the spells, or used them in your own studies, but their affects have been extremely weak — you're unsure if they're anything more than a useful placebo. They certainly have not opened a gateway to anywhere else — but perhaps if you were to acquire an original Arabic. Not that you speak Arabic, of course, but scholars of Arabic can certainly be found.

Attributes

ST	10	HP	10	Languages: Fluent English (written / spoken) Passable spoken Greek Fluent written Greek				
DX	8	Will	16					
IQ	13	Per	14					
HT	10	FP	10					
Basic Lift		20 pounds		Damage	Thrust	1d-2	Swing	1d
Basic Speed		4.5		Basic Move			4	

Skills

Name	Level
Fortune-telling	15
Psychology	14
The Occult	12
Guns	10
Knives	8
Streetwise	14
Parry	6 (with knife)
Dodge	7
Acting	13
Fast-talk	12

Advantages and Disadvantages

- **Empathy:** Whenever you meet someone, you can ask the GM to make an IQ roll at -2 for you. If successful, the GM will give you some general impressions of the person, as to whether you think they're being truthful (but not what the truth is) and so on. On a failure, the GM will lie.
- **Nightmares:** Because of your examination of the occult, your mind has been twisted and damaged. Every time that you sleep you suffer from nightmares. Make a will roll: if you fail, you suffer 1 FP damage that you can only recover through sleep. On a critical failure, you awake shaken, and all rolls that day are at -1. Feel free to improvise the nightmares for the horrific entertainment of the group!

Inventory

- A tarot deck in a red silk bag. +2 to Fortune-telling

- A copy of the I-Ching. Reading this for *an hour* provides a +1 bonus to any one roll in the following 24 hours
- A box of chalk

Spells

- **Ward of Warning:** provides +2 to perception checks to notice if someone has entered an area that you are currently present in. This bonus applies even when asleep: on the successful perception check, someone intruding on the area will awaken you. Environmental penalties still apply. If the GM judges that you are unable to perceive the person, then you will receive no perception check. The ward's sigil must be drawn in the four corners of the area you are warding.

Some notes

You can use your psychology skill to get a sense if someone is lying, although it won't tell you what the truth is. You can also use your act skill to lie yourself. You're very good at it!

Some Rules

The game is only played with 3d6s.

The basic mechanic is simple: every action that something important depends on and that is non-trivial should probably be rolled for. Choose one of the character's attributes (innate abilities) or skills (learned abilities). The player rolls 3d6, sums up the value, and if it is less than or equal to the score, they **succeed**.

A roll of 3 or 4 is a **critical success**. Have something extra good happen.

A roll of 17 or 18 is a **critical failure**. Have something bad happen. The gun jams. The radio shorts.